



Housekeeping as a Profession

Brains - versus Drudgery



WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING

THE State and City of New York are blessed by the fact that the guardianship of their weights and measures is in the hands of the Irish. A deadly dull, over-virtuous reform, laden with recrimination and denunciation, never makes much progress. State Superintendent John F. Farrell and Commissioner Hartigan put their well-taken points over with a peck of punch and a hundredweight of humor and a wealth of fact and common sense.

Two Weights and Measures bulletins issued in January and June of this year from the office of Superintendent Farrell at Albany contain in their twenty-two pages more pertinent information, sound common sense and practical ideas (with the means to work them out) than will be found in huge tomes of the average public document. One is called "For the Purchasing Public" and the other "For Retail Merchants." Just to show that he is serving the whole proletariat and has no class interests, Mr. Farrell has proven that it is just as much to the merchant's interest to have honest weights and measures—and that means accurate ones—as it is to the consumer's.

Mr. Farrell's chief worry seems to be the ignorant or careless housewife. The law will deal with the dishonest or careless merchant—but with the housewife he can only pray—and his message of reproach, humorous entreaty and helpful suggestion must needs appeal to us all. The housekeeper who will not take the trouble to check her own purchases cannot expect that her business will be more tenderly protected by some one else than by herself. Nor can she shirk the fact that careless buying is collaboration with the dishonest merchant and promotes his purpose.

Anne Lewis Price
Director of the Tribune Institute.

A Personal Message to Housekeepers

From JOHN F. FARRELL,
State Superintendent of Weights and Measures.

NO MATTER what avocation a woman may have, she has always the vocation of seeing that her household is run as cheaply and efficiently as possible.

A woman who pays proper attention to weights and measures can buy several new hats from the money saved in the course of a year.

Honest people often inadvertently give wrong change; in the same way honest merchants often give wrong weights or measures. Every woman counts the change she receives, but not every woman weighs or measures or counts what she receives in exchange for her money.

Many housekeepers do not bother about comparisons when they buy; all they care about is price, irrespective of quantity or quality. One housekeeper I know had been buying certain goods at 25 cents a pound and, finding that a certain store was selling what she thought was a pound at 22 cents, bought a supply and started boasting to her friends of her bargain.

One of her friends, who was a more up-to-date housekeeper, looked at the container be-

fore making a purchase and saw that it was not a pound, but only twelve ounces. When the first housekeeper was informed of that, her answer was: "Oh, well, I don't use much of that article, anyhow!"

WHY IT WAS CHEAP.

An inspector of this department saw a friend of his walking down the street with a package in her hand. She told him she had just bought a pound of butter from Smith, although she had always bought from Jones before that, but Jones was charging 34 cents a pound, while Smith was only charging 32 cents. The inspector was curious and asked his friend to let him reweigh the butter.

He found that the so-called pound included a wooden tray, weighing two ounces. The mystery of Smith's low price was solved. It was a solution that the housekeeper should have found for herself.

Many housekeepers think that an ounce or two is too small a matter to bother about. An experience of one of the county sealers will illustrate. This episode deals with the wooden butter tray again, but the main actor is a man.

The sealer was in a new grocery store and noticed the grocer including a wooden tray in the weight. When the sealer warned him a bystander remarked on the officiousness of the sealer, saying that anybody who would make an objection to a small matter like that was of very little account.

AN OBJECT LESSON.

The sealer said nothing at the time, but before leaving the store asked the bystander if he would give him a bill in return for a dollar's worth of change. The bystander consenting, the sealer handed him 95 cents in return for the dollar bill. Thereupon the bystander bristled up and threatened all sorts of dire consequences, but a moment or two later realized the object lesson that had been taught him.

The episode ended by his shaking the sealer's hand and telling him that he would "knock the head off" any man who would try to short-weight him again.

You would not weigh a diamond on a railroad track scale, so don't use a coal scale to weigh butter.

Some day the Legislature of this state

will pass a law prohibiting the sale of a weighing or measuring device which does not conform to the specifications issued by the State Department.

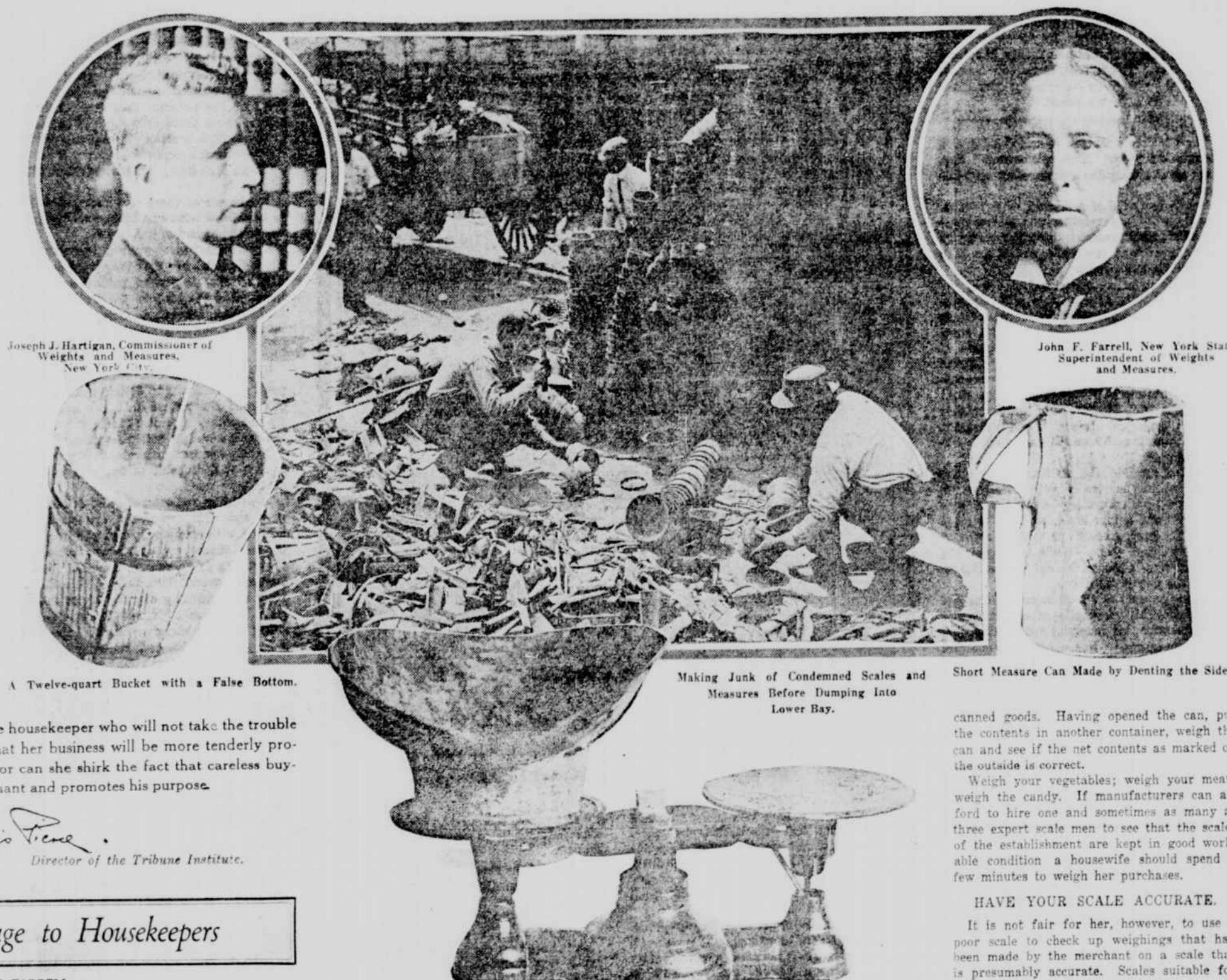
Under the present law any sort of a measure or a scale can be sold, but it cannot be used by the purchaser unless it meets the State specifications. This certainly is not fair to the merchant, as he is taxed not alone to pay the expense of the State Department but he must also study the specifications so as to qualify himself to pass on a measure or a scale offered to him for sale.

ALWAYS BUY BY WEIGHT.

Buy your vegetables and small fruits by weight. Then you know exactly what you receive for your money and can check up on your scale. The law prescribes that certain commodities, such as potatoes, shall weigh a definite number of pounds to the bushel. It is much simpler to ignore terms of measure and to buy directly by weight.

No home is complete without a good reliable scale. It is the duty of a housewife to weigh everything she purchases.

Weigh your loaves of bread; weigh your



Joseph J. Hartigan, Commissioner of Weights and Measures, New York City.

John F. Farrell, New York State Superintendent of Weights and Measures.

A Twelve-quart Bucket with a False Bottom.

Making Junk of Condemned Scales and Measures Before Dumping Into Lower Bay.

Short Measure Can Made by Denting the Sides.

The Kind of Scale That Goes Into the Bay.

packages with the weight or measure as required by law. Instead of haling them before the court, they were persuaded to live up to the law.

To-day there are over 200 people in that establishment with no other duty to perform but weigh the different commodities used and the manufactured units. I have been told that the information thus gathered is invaluable, and the system involved the most economical ever devised. The authorities have knowledge of every ounce of commodities coming in and going out of that enormous establishment.

TELEPHONE AND GROW FAT.

The woman who telephones her orders to the butcher, the grocer, the candlestick maker is not fair to herself, to the producing member of the family or the merchant. She deprives herself of an invigorating walk in the morning air; she easily acquires lazy habits, and wonders why she is putting on flesh—the bugbear of the modern woman. She does not receive the full measure for her expenditure; every telephone call increases the price of the commodity so purchased above the market quotation; the dishonest clerk or merchant has more temptation to short weigh or measure than he would if the purchaser were watching the scale.

You will be surprised at the results of careful buying and accurate checking of commodities bought.

New York City inspectors picked up a hanging spring scale from a fruit dealer a few days ago which had long wire nails hanging on the chains holding the pan. These nails were in full view of customers. The scale was watched for three or four days and not one complaint was made by any one purchaser.

Every purchaser, under the law, must be given some written representation of the weight or measure of the commodity delivered; this must be plainly and conspicuously marked or branded on the container or wrapper or on a tag or label attached thereto, or to the commodity.

TEACH THE CHILDREN THEIR TABLES.

I have also to present an indictment against many women in regard to the way their children are educated. The youngsters are often taught all sorts of more or less useless things; but when it comes to weights and measures, which must be used every day of the child's after life, the teaching is either very cursory or entirely lacking.

The mother pays no heed to having her children learn the various tables, and as a result very few people, either children or adults, know what they are really buying.

A certain concern sold a small-sized package of its goods, which was plainly marked "1/2 pound" for 5 cents and a large package similarly marked "14 ounces" for 10 cents. Innumerable housekeepers bought the larger package, evidently not knowing that fourteen ounces was not twice as much as half a pound. Such ignorance would be amusing if it were not sad.

Those who have already passed the school age must learn by experience, but it is now time to provide that the children of the present generation do not grow up in even greater darkness.

WHAT EVERY HOUSEKEEPER SHOULD KNOW.

THE name of the local sealer. There is one in every county or city. It is his business to instruct and help you concerning any matter pertaining to weights and measures. The State Superintendent of Weights and Measures at Albany can tell you who he is, or answer complaints and inquiries himself.

A written representation of the weight, measure, or numerical count should accompany nearly everything you purchase. The few exceptions include milk and cream in standard bottles; fruits in standard measures; small quantities (less than two fluid ounces or three avoirdupois ounces); ornamented gift boxes; goods sold by count when the number is less than six, etc.

A net weight statement should not include the container or wrapping; you do not want to pay for them.

Buy by weight rather than by dry measure; "heap measure" especially is inaccurate.

Always buy by definite quantity. Never buy by the box, pail or basket. In case of scale weighing make sure that:

1. The dial is within full view of the buyer and that the dial reads zero when no weight is on the scale.
2. The merchant does not put his hand on the scale and that no hooks, or strings or chains are attached to the scale.
3. The weigher does not hurry—the indicator should come to rest on the beam to an equilibrium before taking the object off the pan.
4. Weights and scale are clean.

Liquid measures are about 15 per cent smaller than the corresponding dry measures—be sure they are not substituted for each other. Buy by weight when possible rather than measure of any kind.

Vegetables sold by dry measure should be heaped in a cone as high as the commodity will permit. There are large air spaces in between for which you are paying.

Coal and ice present especial difficulties and need special attention. They should always be accompanied by a ticket showing amount delivered. If they cannot be reweighed their weight can be calculated by contents approximately. These figures are all worked out for you for different kinds of coal in Mr. Farrell's bulletin, "For the Purchasing Public."

A good scale, a set of dry and liquid measures, a steel tape and a good yardstick will prove a paying investment for checking up your purchases at home.

SOME WEIGHTY EPIGRAMS.

For the retail merchant:

Short cuts to convenience are often shorter cuts to failure.

Do not accept on faith all the methods that have become customary; think for yourself why you do a thing and continue to do it only if it is sound business policy.

The merchant who buys on the basis of price only is doing an injustice to himself as well as to his customers.

Remember, you are the main loser by having improper scales and measures. If you give less than the proper weight and measure you are sure to lose customers sooner or later and leave yourself liable to prosecution; if you give more you are losing on every sale.

For the buyer:

Do not start out with the idea that checking up quantity implies dishonesty on the part of the dealer. You count money even at a bank—why be less careful about what you get for your money?

If you will pay meat prices for burlap we cannot protect you. We can only tell you that net weight representations should be made, and these do not include wrappings.

More cheating is brought about by carelessness than by dishonesty. Give him a chance to explain. The honest merchant welcomes honest criticism.

Laws and officials can help effectively only when you try to help yourselves.

From Weights and Measures Bulletins Nos. 4 and 5, 1910.

IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE

THESE experiences, so far as we know, represent genuine personal discoveries or household traditions. We are once more making this clear because some persons are sending in alleged "experiences" which are copied from books or clipped from other papers. It is hardly necessary to say that these are of no use to us or our readers, and will not be printed. The Tribune Institute is glad to send \$1 for each experience contributed, provided it is genuine and useful to other housewives.

I find a good way to mend lace curtains that are past mending any other way is to take a piece of curtain like the one to be mended, cut out a piece a little larger than hole. Dip in cold starch water and lay over place to be mended. With white paper over all, iron until perfectly dry, then remove paper. The mended place can hardly be detected when hung by the window.—C. E. R., New York.

Put a tiny clove of garlic in your ready-made salad dressing and find a new and piquant flavor in it which will baffle your friends. If you don't like the garlic use a little onion juice. It breaks the flat taste of prepared salad dressing.—Mrs. G. H., New York.

If I were asked suddenly to name the most useful thing in my handy little kitchen I would say my sharp scissors, which hang above my work table. I use them for more things than I could possibly enumerate. For example, they are very valuable for cutting up vegetables and bits of meat that I do not want to bother to chop or put in the grinder.—M. J. P., Iowa.

My kitchen being small, I was always perplexed to find a handy way of resting my ironing board without using a chair back. I have, however, solved the problem by opening a drawer, slipping one end of the board in the drawer and underneath the dresser top. The board is quite firm and leaves one end free for skirts, etc.—Mrs. E. H., New York.

To save expense of cold storage I make bags of four or five thicknesses of newspapers stitched together on the sewing machine about one inch from the edge, keeping one end open until muffed, neck scarf or any small fur piece is put in the bag, then stitch end across. I have done this for several years with perfect success, using a separate bag for each article.—Mrs. M. S. V., Connecticut.